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IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

1. DNR unveils new web site

DNR UNVEILS NEW WEB SITE

DES MOINES — If you visit the State Capitol Complex in Des Moines, you'll find a great deal of construction going on. But not all of it makes use of bricks and backhoes.

Visitors to the DNR's web site will find some striking changes beginning in January. The department has begun a web site rebuilding and redesign project that will take nearly a year to complete. But the final product will be worth the wait.

"We've gone into this project with an eye toward the needs of our users," said Bob Castelline, the site's designer. "We think the public is going to love it."

The redesign focuses on three objectives, one of which is to create a site that operates from the user's perspective.

"Our goal here is that when users open our homepage, they get an immediate feeling that the page is asking, 'What can we do to serve you?'" Castelline said. "That's a switch from a site that says, 'Here we are. Look at us.'"

A second objective is to create a site that maximizes ease of use while maintaining a strong visual image. The homepage will feature two completely separate navigation areas. One is for users who are familiar with DNR structure. The other will feature easy-to-follow links that will guide users who might not know what the DNR has to offer.

The web site also will be easier to access. The site's domain name will change to www.iowadnr.com, making it easy to remember. Netster Solutions, previous owner of the domain name, donated the name to the DNR.

Users will also find a new page header and eye-catching graphic elements, as well as news, features, tips, links to important outside agencies and much more. All this will be done on a homepage that will take about five seconds to download on a 56K modem.

In addition, users eventually will be able to subscribe to *The Iowa Conservationist* online, with the convenience of making payment by credit card.

“We’re committed to making online subscription available to our readers,” said Al Foster, the magazine’s managing editor. “We’re in the process of testing our software, and as soon as it’s ready, we’ll be up and running.”

The final objective is to create a web site that has consistency in form and function throughout. With three divisions, 15 bureaus and more than 2,000 pages containing roughly 2 gigabytes of information, this is no simple task.

“Users need to know that no matter where they are in our site, they’re still in the DNR,” Castelline said. “This part of the project is the most difficult for us to accomplish because it involves so many pages and all of our bureaus. That means it will take the longest to complete.”

The DNR homepage is up and running, but all bureau pages won’t be complete until the fall of 2003. While the site should be fully functional at all times, users should be aware that unforeseen problems could occur along the way.

DNR Webmaster Tracy Cardwell urges users not only to have patience, but also to speak up when problems pop up.

“If a link doesn’t work or a similar problem occurs, we need to know,” Cardwell said. “If you come across a problem, give us a call. We want to make it right.”

For more information, contact Bob Castelline at (515) 281-0879, or by e-mail at bob.castelline@dnr.state.ia.us. To report a problem with the web site, contact Tracy Cardwell at (515) 242-6526, or by e-mail at tracy.cardwell@dnr.state.ia.us.